AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A method for treating urinary incontinence comprising:

applying vacuum pressure to an instrument proximate to a urethral wall of a patient to draw a portion of the urethral wall into a cavity in the instrument;

forming a hole in the portion of the urethral wall disposed in the cavity; and

implanting a bulking prosthesis through the hole proximate to [[a]] an external urethral sphincter[[,]]

~~wherein the bulking prosthesis has a partial cylinder shape with a substantially C-shaped cross-section and an inner surface radius that is sized to conform to close a urethra of the patient when the patient exercises voluntary control over an external urethral sphincter of the patient~~.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis is in a miniature state at the time of implantation and assumes an enlarged state after implantation.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein forming the hole comprises forming the hole with a needle having a lumen, and wherein implanting the bulking prosthesis comprises pushing the bulking prosthesis through the lumen in the needle.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a hydrogel.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a material that absorbs fluid to assume the enlarged state.

6. (Currently amended) A system comprising:

a tubular instrument having a distal end and sized for introduction into a urethra of a patient, the distal end including a cavity;

a vacuum port to draw a portion of a urethral wall of the patient into the cavity;

a needle to make a hole through the urethral wall in the portion of the urethral wall disposed in the cavity;

~~a bulking prosthesis having a partial cylinder shape with a substantially C-shaped cross-section and an inner surface radius;~~ and

a pushing agent to push [[the]] a bulking prosthesis through the tubular instrument and

through the hole in the urethral wall,

wherein ~~the inner surface radius is sized to conform to close the urethra when the patient exercises voluntary control over an external urethral sphincter of the patient~~ the distal end of the tubular instrument includes an inflatable balloon to assist with positioning of the distal end in the body of the patient.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6, further comprising:

a source of vacuum pressure; and

a conduit to deliver the vacuum pressure from the source to the urethral wall.

8. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the tubular instrument comprises the needle.

9. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the tubular instrument comprises a cystoscope.

10-32. (Cancelled)

33. (New) The system of claim 6, wherein the bulking prosthesis has a partial cylinder shape with a substantially C-shaped cross-section and an inner surface radius.

34. (New) The system of claim 33, wherein the inner surface radius is sized to conform to close the urethra when the patient exercises voluntary control over an external urethral sphincter of the patient.

35. (New) The system of claim 34, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a first bulking prosthesis and a second bulking prosthesis, each of the first and second bulking prosthesis comprising the partial cylinder shape with the substantially C-shaped cross section, the first and second bulking prosthesis being implantable proximate to the external urethral sphincter on opposite sides of the urethra of the patient.

36. (New) The system of claim 35, wherein the partial cylinder shape is substantially a half cylinder shape.